

## WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:-

1. A developing device comprising:
  - a developing member that develops a latent image formed on a latent image bearing member;
  - a toner supplying member that supplies a toner to said developing member;
  - a toner layer forming member that has a peripheral surface contacting said developing member; and
  - a toner layer regulating member that regulates the thickness of a toner layer that adheres to said peripheral surface of said toner layer forming member,wherein said toner layer is transferred from said peripheral surface of said toner layer forming member to a peripheral surface of said developing member, after the thickness of said toner layer has been regulated by said toner layer regulating member.
2. The developing device according to claim 1, further comprising a toner container for storing said toner,
  - wherein said toner supplying member supplies said toner to said developing member, said toner layer is formed on said toner layer forming member, and said toner layer regulating member regulates the thickness of said toner layer on said toner layer forming member in said toner container, and
  - wherein, said toner layer forming member carries said toner layer, the thickness of which has been regulated by said toner layer regulating member, to the exterior of said toner container, and said toner layer is transferred to said developing member at the exterior of said container.
3. The developing device according to claim 1, wherein said developing member rotates in a certain direction, and said toner layer forming member rotates in the same direction as said developing member, and
  - wherein, as said developing member rotates, a part of

said toner supplied to said developing member by said toner supplying member is carried through a gap between said developing member and said toner layer forming member in the rotational direction of said developing member, and is mixed with said toner layer transferred from said toner layer forming member.

4. The developing device according to claim 1, further comprising means for applying electric potentials to said developing member and said toner layer forming member for transferring said toner layer from said toner layer forming member to said developing member.

5. The developing device according to claim 1, wherein each of said developing member, said toner layer forming member and said toner supplying member is in the form of a roller.

6. The developing device according to claim 1, wherein the releasability of said peripheral surface of said developing member is greater than the releasability of said peripheral surface of said toner layer forming member.

7. The developing device according to claim 1, wherein the surface roughness of said peripheral surface of said developing member is less than that of said toner layer forming member.

8. The developing device according to claim 1, wherein said developing member has an outer layer made of a resin.

9. The developing device according to claim 1, wherein said toner layer forming member has an outer layer made of a rubber.

10. The developing device according to claim 1, wherein said toner layer forming member is pushed against said developing member, and a pushing amount of said toner layer forming member is equal to or greater than 0.2 mm.

11. The developing device according to claim 1, further comprising an urging mechanism that resiliently urges said toner layer forming member against said developing member.

12. The developing device according to claim 1, wherein the static friction coefficient of said peripheral surface of said developing member is equal to or less than 0.58, with respect to a flat surface of an acryl resin having an average surface roughness of approximately 2  $\mu\text{m}$ .

13. The developing device according to claim 12, wherein the static friction coefficient of said peripheral surface of said developing member is equal to or less than 0.36, with respect to a flat surface of an acryl resin having an average surface roughness of approximately 2  $\mu\text{m}$ .

14. The developing device according to claim 1, wherein the circumferential speed of said peripheral surface of said toner layer forming member is less than that of said developing member.

15. The developing device according to claim 1, wherein said toner layer regulating member includes a blade that contacts said peripheral surface of said toner layer forming member, and said blade has a contacting surface that faces said toner layer forming member and extends in a longitudinal direction of said toner layer forming member.

16. The developing device according to claim 15, wherein a cross section of said contacting surface of said blade perpendicular to said longitudinal direction of said blade is curved and has a radius of curvature in a range from 0.3 to 0.5 mm.

17. The developing device according to claim 15, said blade is urged against said toner layer forming member with a pressure in a range from 10 to 50  $\text{g}/\text{cm}^2$ .

18. The developing device according to claim 1, further comprising means for applying electric potentials VD, VS and VL to said developing member, said toner supplying member and said toner layer forming member, and said electric potentials VD, VS and VL satisfy the following relationships (1) and (2).

$$|VD| \leq |VS| \quad \dots (1)$$

$$|VD| \leq |VL| \quad \dots (2)$$

19. The developing device according to claim 1, further comprising an auxiliary supplying member that supplies said toner to said toner layer forming member.

20. The developing device according to claim 19, wherein said auxiliary supplying member contacts said peripheral surface of said toner layer forming member, and rotates in the same direction as said toner layer forming member.

21. The developing device according to claim 19, wherein electric potentials VH and VL are respectively applied to said auxiliary supplying member and said toner layer forming member, and said electric potentials VH and VL satisfy the following relationship (3).

$$|VH| \geq |VL| \quad \dots (3)$$

22. The developing device according to claim 1, further comprising an additional supplying member that supplies said toner to said toner supplying member.

23. The developing device according to claim 22, wherein said additional supplying member contacts said peripheral surface of said toner supplying member and rotates in the same direction as said toner supplying member.

24. The developing device according to claim 23, wherein electric potentials VT and VS are respectively applied to said

additional supplying member and said toner supplying member, and said electric potentials VT and VS satisfy the following relationship (4).

$$|VT| \geq |VS| \quad \dots (4)$$

25. The developing device according to claim 1, wherein said developing member rotates in a certain direction, and said toner layer forming member rotates in the same direction as said developing member.

26. An electrophotographic apparatus comprising:  
said developing device according to claim 1;  
said latent image bearing member that carries a latent image developed by said developing device; and  
a transfer device that transfers said toner image developed by said developing device to a recording medium.